Racial Democracies: Brazil vs. Mexico

Thursdays, 2 – 4:40pm, Meliora 218

Prof. Molly Ball (she/hers), [mollycball@rochester.edu](mailto:mollycball@rochester.edu)

Office hours: W, 10am – 12pm

Mexico and Brazil are countries with complex cultural, racial and ethnic histories. This seminar will explore the process by which these two countries grappled with their diverse populations during the modern era and how policies and attitudes impacted citizens, residents and perceptions. The course will investigate the limitations that arose from Mexico’s pursuit of a “cosmic race” and how the myth of Brazil’s “racial democracy” was created and debunked. We will debate the durability of these constructions and the limitations that arise from cross-country comparisons. Discussing these events often creates uncomfortable conversations, so it is of utmost importance in this course to be cognizant of different points of view and experiences and engage in thoughtful and respectful discussion. You should strive to reference the texts in your arguments and critiques, and I challenge each of you to question your own constructs and conceptions as we delve into these materials.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

* Recognize development of racial democracy myth and how national identity formation in Mexico and Brazil impacted the social construction of race and ethnicity in the twentieth century.
* Explore hemispheric tendencies and movements and debate the benefits and limits of transnational comparisons.
* Feel comfortable conducting independent research, analyzing documents, and structuring a cohesive and well-written research project that engages primary and secondary literature.
* Improve critical reading and writing skills, especially honing ability to respond to academic critiques and improve arguments.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Commitment to inclusion:**The University of Rochester, this course, and I are committed to inclusion and welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities and to providing a quality education to all students, regardless of their race, sex, gender, or immigration status. Some available resources for students with DACA or undocumented status can be accessed at <http://www.rochester.edu/college/ccas/undergraduate/daca/index.html>.   
Please reach out to me if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or your full participation in this course.

**Syllabus update statement:**

Regarding full course policies, commitment to inclusion, expectations, rubrics, required materials, etc. please refer to the “Course Overview and Introduction” folder available on Blackboard. As modules and lessons will be added as needed, this syllabus will provide with a preview of what is coming. Any films with an asterisk indicate available access through the University of Rochester library system. Any changes in schedule and readings, and will be updated in the BLACKBOARD MODULES. Please refer to the modules for the most up-to-date information.

**Getting in touch with your professor:** The two most effective ways of reaching me are 1) coming to office hours and 2) emailing me ([mollycball@rochester.edu](mailto:mollycball@rochester.edu)).

* My office hours will be on Wednesdays from 10am - 12pm. You can just drop by (Rush Rhees 449) If there is something specific that you would like to discuss during office hours, you can send me an email ahead of time so that I can prepare (but you do not have to). If you cannot attend my office hours in person, you can request to connect via zoom. If you have a class or work conflict during my office hours, we can find another time to meet.
* I check emails Monday - Saturday (not Sundays). I will answer your email within 24-48 hours.
  + When writing an email, it is best to use Prof. Ball or Dr. Ball in the salutation.
  + Remember, include your name when signing off (even if you're sending it via your cell).

**Course Design:**

A seminar model class meets traditionally meets for 3 hours each week.

To facilitate discussion, I ask that:

* On Wednesday of each week, students post two questions based on the course readings for class discussion on the following day. One should be a question that you find of great interest and the other one that confuses or does not convince you. Make sure to include any appropriate page references to your questions.
* On Thursday:
  + Come to class on time. Return to class on time (after our break).
  + Come prepared to discuss the questions posted by your classmates for that week’s reading.

Contingency plan (should classes be online):

* The course time will be maintained, but we will all meet online during the scheduled period via zoom.

*Extra Hour Policy:* In accordance with the university’s credit hour policy, students are expected to spend an additional hour reading and thoughtfully contributing to the course discussion board. Students are also encouraged to join a writing group related to course material and to ‘attend’ virtual or in-person events related to course content. These may include conferences, community events, film screenings, etc.

**Illness statement:**   
We will follow all university guidelines related to COVID-19 in our classroom. It is very nice, however, to not be writing an explicit COVID-19 statement. There will still be instances where illness might prevent you from coming to class. If you are clearly contagious or have tested positive for flu or COVID, you should not come to class. You should also send me an email letting me know that you will be absent.

*Missed material/assignments due to illness:*

* Unless illness prevents you, you are still expected to post questions to discussion board by Wednesday.

**Grading Rubric**

**Undergraduate:** Participation, 30%; Book reviews 10%; Research Paper, 60%

**Graduate students:** Participation, 20%; Book reviews, 20%; Research Paper, 60%

**Participation**

As a seminar class, we will only meet once a week, so attendance is a key portion of your participation grade. Classes are discussion-driven and will engage in intellectual debates. Your courteous and thoughtful participation, thus, is integral to a strong class dynamic.

Discussion board participation is also integral to the success of this course (see course design above). Questions should be both thoughtful and thought-provoking and must be submitted on time (by Wednesday at 11:59pm) to receive full credit. When possible, students should strive to review and think about their classmates’ questions before the start of class.

**Book reviews**

Throughout the semester, students will submit book reviews. These reviews should succinctly summarize the author’s main arguments, the sources and methods that he or she uses and the strengths and weaknesses of the approach. Reviews should dialogue with other course readings and concepts. The work’s bibliographic citation should appear in the header of the review. Students are also expected to incorporate and improve reviews based on feedback. Reviews will be submitted via blackboard and are single spaced and 1500 to 1800 words.

Undergraduates will submit a review in weeks 5 (Graham’s *Shifting the Meaning of Democracy*) and 9 (Gillingham’s *Cuauhtemoc’s Bones*). Graduate students will submit additional reviews in weeks 2 (Stepan’s *The Hour of Eugenics*), 3 (Miki’s *Frontiers of Citizenship*)and in week 9 will write a more extensive review that also incorporatesLópez’s *Crafting Mexico*.

**Research Paper (60%)**

You will write an original 5,000- to 5,500-word research paper. Notes count toward the final word count, but tables, charts, figures, and bibliography do not (roughly 18 – 20 pages)\*\*. This will be a Chicago-style research paper that critically examines a specific topic. This is not a purely historiographic paper and you will be expected to use both primary and secondary sources. Although you are not expected to be able to conduct research in a foreign language, I strongly encourage you to use these resources if you can.

You will register a tentative topic by week 6, scheduling an individual meeting or attending office hours to register your topic. **If you choose to work on a topic in the post-1990 period, you must provide further justification when registering your topic that shows how your approach will be historical in nature (as opposed to a public policy, sociology, anthropology, political science, etc. perspective).**

As a part of the research process, you must submit an annotated bibliography and outline in week 10 (along with your presentation) and FULL rough draft (due Wednesday, Nov. 23rd). The annotated bibliography and outline will be 15% of the final grade (10% for graduate students). Each research presentation will be 5% of the overall grade.

The first draft you submit before Thanksgiving will be graded as if it were the final draft. After revising and resubmitting, your final grade will replace the rough draft grade. As revision and resubmission is an important part of the writing process and required to receive a W credit, if you do not to submit either a first draft or a final draft with revisions, you will receive an incomplete. You will receive more specific instructions on these components as assignments become due.

**Undergrads***: Annotated Bibliography and Outline (15%)* + *Presentation (5%)* + *Final presentation (5%)* + *Rough draft / Final draft with revisions (35%)* = 60%

**Graduate students**: *Annotated bibliography, outline & historiography (10%)* + *Presentation (5%)* + *Final presentation (5%)* + *Rough draft / Final draft with revisions (40%)* = 60%

\*\*Students enrolled in the graduate course will be required to submit a 6,500- to 7,500-word final research paper. Roughly five to six pages should include a discussion of major historiographical trends related to their final research topic. A rough draft of this historiographical discussion should be submitted along with the annotated bibliography and outline. We will work over the semester to develop an additional meeting times and readings that align with the graduate student’s particular research interests. The syllabus rubric will be impacted accordingly.

**TEXTS**

***Required***

Gamio, Manuel, and Fernando. Armstrong-Fumero. *Forjando Patria Pro-Nacionalismo. Translated and with an Introduction by Fernando Armstrong-Fumero.* 3a ed. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2010. (online)

Graham, Jessica Lynn, *Shifting the Meaning of Democracy: Race, Politics, and Culture in the United States and Brazil.* 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019. (online)

Gillingham, Paul. *Cuauhtémoc’s Bones: Forging National Identity in Modern Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011. (hard copy only)

***Recommended***

Vaughan, Mary K., and Stephen E. Lewis, Eds.. *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940*. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2006.

Alberto, Paulina L. *Terms of Inclusion Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil*. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. (online)

**Grad level required / Undergrad recommended:**

Miki, Yuko. *Frontiers of Citizenship: A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.(online)

Stepan, Nancy *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America /* Nancy Leys Stepan. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991. (hard copy only)

**Grad level required**

Lopez, Rick A. *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution*. Duke University Press, 2010. (online)

**COURSE SCHEDULE**(Remember that any small reading additions or changes will appear in the   
blackboard modules and will not reflect on this original syllabus.)

**Module 1**

**The Beginnings**

(weeks 1 &2) – Sep. 1, Sep. 8

Overview: Here we will explore the colonial origins and nineteenth century origins of the racial democracy myth in Brazil and Mexico.

Readings:

Sep. 1 - Vinson "Before Mestizaje" chapter; Andrews' *Afro-Latin America* introduction

Sep. 8 - \*\*Selections from da Cunha's Rebellion in the Backlands; Stepan The Hour of Eugenics, chapters 2 and 5. "Eugenics in Latin America: Its Origins and Institutional Ecology; "National Identities and Racial Transformations."

\*\* Graduate students should complete The Hour of Eugenics and submit a book review by the start of class on Wednesday, September 2nd. HIST452: Entirety of *The Hours of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America.* 1500-word, single-spaced book review due by the start of class.

Suggested Reading

* Brazil:
  + Kim D. Butler (2017) “Masquerading Africa in the Carnival of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil 1895–1905,” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 10:2, 203-227, DOI: [10.1080/17528631.2016.1189690](https://doi.org/10.1080/17528631.2016.1189690)
* Mexico:
  + Priego, Natalia. "Porfirio Díaz, Positivism, and ‘The Scientists’." In *Positivism, Science and ‘The Scientists’ in Porfirian Mexico: The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer in the Historiography of Mexico*, 16-44. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016. Accessed August 10, 2020. [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1gn6d2z.5](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1gn6d2z.5).

Activities

* To prepare, students should post question to discussion board (see course schedule above).

**Module 2**

**Brazil – Independence through 1940s**

(weeks 3, 4, 5) – Sep. 15; Sep. 22; Sep. 29

Reading Schedule:

Sep. 15: Miki, Frontiers of Citizenship, chapters 2, 3 & 4; ministry of education selection

\* Graduate students should submit a book review for Miki's *Frontiers of Citizenship* by the beginning of class in week 3 (Sep. 15).

Sep. 22: Graham, Introduction – chapter 3; Alberto, Terms of Inclusion, chapter 2; Alison Parker, "When White Women Wanted a Monument to Black 'Mammies'," New York Times, Feb 6, 2020.

Recommended: Alberto, chapter 3; Butler, Kim D. Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won Afro-Brazilians in Post-Abolition, São Paulo and Salvador. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1998. (chapter 3 works well with Alberto)

Sep. 29: Graham, chapters 4 – 5; Skidmore, Thomas E. “Raí­zes De Gilberto Freyre.” Journal of Latin American Studies 34, no. 1 (2002): 1-20. Accessed August 24, 2020. <http://www>.jstor.org/stable/3875385.; Freyre selection

\*All students should submit a review for Graham's *Shifting the Meaning of Democracy* by the beginning class in week 5 (Sep. 29).

Suggested Reading: Borges, Dain. "The Recognition of Afro-Brazilian Symbols and Ideas, 1890-1940." Luso-Brazilian Review 32, no. 2 (1995): 59-78. Accessed August 10, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/3513625

Outside Events:

* Saturday, September 24, 8:30-9:30 pm – Fringe Festival, JChris concert, Urban Latin Tunes, Theater at Innovation Square ($22 ticket)
* Sunday, September 25, 12-4pm – Hispanic Heritage Month celebration at MAG (free)
* Monday, October 1st, 3pm – *Como Agua Para Chocolate* will be shown at The Little (cost of student ticket).

**Module 3**

**Sociology/Anthropology (modern theory and challenges)** (week 6) – Oct. 6

Oct. 6: Sue, Christina A. *Land of the Cosmic Race: Race Mixture, Racism, and Blackness in Mexico*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Introduction.

Telles, Edward E, and Edward E Telles. *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*. Princeton University Press, 2014., chapters 7 & 8.

Interview with Pablo Piccato and Claudio Lomnitz, "Building the Mexican State: the Notion of Citizenship" Journal of International Affiars 66.3 (2012). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24388294>

\* You should also register your intended research topic in a zoom meeting either during office hours or at a different time by the end of this week.

**Module 4**

**Mexico (cosmic race and nationhood)**

(week 7, 8, 9) – Oct. 13; Oct. 20; Oct. 27

Reading Schedule:

Oct. 13: Gamio's *Forjando* *Patria*; Priego "Porfirio Díaz, Positivism, and 'The Scientists'."

Oct. 20: Knight "Race, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico: 1910-1920"; Lewis, “The Nation, Education, and the “Indian Problem” in Mexico, 1920 – 1940;” Lopez, “The Noche Mexicana and the Exhibition of Popular Arts: Two Ways of Exalting Indianness;” (Lewis and Lopez in *The Eagle and the Virgen*);

October 27 - Gillingham, *Cuauhtemoc's Bones*.

\*All undergraduate students will have a 1500-word book review due by the beginning of class in week 9 on *Cuauhtemoc's Bones.* Graduate students will submit a 2000- to 2200- word collective and comparative analytic review of Gillingham's *Cuauhtemoc's Bones* and Lopez's *Crafting Mexico*.

Suggested Reading:Vaughn, Mary Kay “Nationalizing the Countryside”; Bantjes, “Saints, Sinners, and State Formation: Local Religion and Cultural Revolution in Mexico” in *The Eagle and the Virgen*

Outside Events:

* Thursday, October 20, 5**-**7pm Humanities Center Conference Room D, Michelle Stevens (Rutgers, Latino and Caribbean Studies and English) gives Craig Owens Memorial Lecture (free)

**Module 5**

**Research week**

(week 10) – Nov. 3

\* In week 10 (Nov. 3), you will be expected to present your preliminary research topic to the class. This is not merely a vague idea, but you should present the genesis of your idea, a summary of related research that you have found and a tentative research plan that details how you plan to complete the research. In order for everyone to be able to present, your presentation will be limited to 10 minutes. You should also pose any specific questions that you want your classmates to answer.

You will receive feedback on your presentation that should incorporate into your final presentations.

**Module 4**

**Brazil / Mexico – 60s through 90s**

(week 11, 12, 13) – Nov. 10; Nov. 17; Dec. 1

Nov. 10: Eakin, Marshall, *Becoming Brazilians*, chapter 6; Nascimento, Abdias Do, and Elisa Larkin Nascimento. "Reflections of an Afro-Braziliano."; Telles, Edward, René D. Flores, and Fernando Urrea-Giraldo. "Pigmentocracies: Educational Inequality, Skin Color and Census Ethnoracial Identification in Eight Latin American Countries."

Nov. 17: Muñoz, María L. O. *Stand up and Fight : Participatory Indigenismo, Populism, and Mobilization in Mexico, 1970-1984,* chapters 4 & 5.; Dillingham, A. S. “Indigenismo Occupied: Indigenous Youth and Mexico’s Democratic Opening (1968-1975).” The Americas 72, no. 4 (2015): 549–82. The second half of class will be reserved for research meetings.

\*FULL PAPER DRAFT due on Wednesday, November 25th at 11:59pm!

Dec. 1: Watch Ebony Baily's documentary Life Between Borders: Black Migrants in Mexico;

Suggested Readings: Buechler, Simone. "Sweating It in the Brazilian Garment Industry: Korean and Bolivian Immigrants and Global Economic Forces in São Paulo." Latin American Perspectives 31, no. 3 (2004): 99-119. Accessed August 24, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3185185>.; "Brazil's Immigrant Song." World Policy Journal 31, no. 4 (2014): 108-19.; Alberto “When Rio Was Black”; Alberto “Para Africano Ver,”; Covin, David. “Afrocentricity in O Movimento Negro Unificado.” *Journal of Black Studies* 21, no. 2 (1990): 126–44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2784470>.

**Final Presentations**

December 1 and December 8

\*In weeks 14 & 15 you will present your research to your classmates. These will be organized as moc-conference sessions based on your topics (2 sessions/day). Each presentation should be 15 minutes with a collective 15- to 20-minute Q&A session from your classmates. While the style of this presentation is may change a bit from your presentation in week 10, remember to incorporate critiques from your preliminary presentation.

\*Full, revised drafts are due at the end of our final exam slot. They should be submitted via blackboard by Wednesday, December 21st at 3:30pm.